### Archaeological Evaluation of Land at the John Wallis Academy, Millbank Road, Ashford, Kent

Site Code: JWA 17

NGR: NGR Site Centre: 599809 140287

Planning Application Number: KCC/AS/0239/2017



# Report for; The John Wallis Church of England Academy 07/09/2017

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# Archaeological Evaluation of Land at the John Wallis Academy, Millbank Road, Ashford, Kent

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#### **Summary**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by The John Wallis Church of England Academy to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land within the western extent of the existing site. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Principal Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was carried out in July 2017 in accordance with an archaeological specification (SWAT Archaeology 2017) submitted to, and approved by, KCC prior to commencement of works.

The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of nine trenches, which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising either tarmac/formation layers overlying natural deposits or topsoil sealing an intact colluvium which overlay the natural clay geology. Despite the potential for archaeological remains and relatively good preservation conditions no archaeological finds or features were recorded.

The results of this evaluation have been prepared to inform the decision for any further archaeological mitigation that may be required by the local planning authority and Kent County Council.

### Archaeological Evaluation of Land at the John Wallis Academy, Millbank Road, Ashford, Kent

NGR Site Centre: 599809 140287 Site Code: JWA 17

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by The John Wallis Church of England Academy to undertake an archaeological evaluation on the western extent of the existing site (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 A planning application (KC/AS/17/236) was submitted to Kent County Council (KCC) for the construction of a new 2 FE two-storey primary school with nursery facility with associated soft and hard landscaping and access to form a 3 -19 through school. The Heritage & Conservation Department, who provide an archaeological advisory service to the KCC Planning Department, recommended that an archaeological investigation took place in advance of any development work. This recommendation was subsequently added as a Condition to the planning approval, which stated that;

'Prior to the commencement of development, the applicant or their agents or successors in title, shall secure and implement:

- (i) Archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority; and
- (ii) Further archaeological investigation recording and reporting, determined by the results of the evaluation, in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority. Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded. Archaeological remains could be damaged by development therefore an approved programme of archaeological investigation must be in place before development starts'

(AS/17/236, Condition 12, 11/07/2017)

1.1.3 The fieldwork was carried out in July 2017 in accordance with an archaeological specification (SWAT Archaeology 2017) submitted to, and approved by, KCC prior to commencement of works. A copy of the Specification is provided in Appendix 2.

#### 1.2 Site Description and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site is centred on NGR 599809 140287, located *c*.2.5km south of Ashford in the Stanhope area south-west of the town centre (Figure 1). The proposed development site consisted of an area formerly used as playing fields and comprised partly hard standings, in the form of two sports courts, and open turfed areas. The site is bounded to the north and east by existing sports pitches, to the west by playing fields and to the south the Runcie Building. The site is on flat ground at a level of approximately 43.5m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.2.2 According to the British Geological Society, the underlying geology comprises Weald Clay Mudstone.

#### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Further details of previous discoveries and investigations within the immediate and wider area may be found in the Kent County Council Historic Environment Record and have been summarised in a Desk-based Archaeological Assessment by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust (2016).

#### 2.2 Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

2.2.1 The archaeological record for the site indicates that there are no designated heritage assets on the site and none in the immediate vicinity of the site. The archaeological potential is highlighted in the Archaeological Desk based Assessment (CAT 2016), which concludes that 'archaeological remains of regional significance are likely to be extant within the proposed development area' (2016: Summary) with particular emphasis on the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods (2016: 6.11)

#### 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 General Aims

- 3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological fieldwork, as set out in the Specification (Appendix 2) were to determine the potential for Prehistoric, Iron Age, Roman and medieval remains within the proposed site (2017: 2). In addition, the objectives of the evaluation also included;
  - to establish the presence or absence of any elements of the archaeological resource, both artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest across the area of the development;

- to ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit if possible, character, date and quality of any such archaeological remains by limited sample excavation;
- to determine the state of preservation and importance of the archaeological resource, if
  present, and to assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the
  character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of any
  archaeological deposits;
   Also,
- The opportunity will also be taken during the course of the evaluation to place and assess any archaeology revealed within the context of other recent archaeological investigations in the immediate area and within the setting of the local landscape and topography. Specific research questions that may be answered are to identify the archaeological anomalies highlighted by the recent geophysical survey. In general, the work is to ensure compliance with the archaeological requirement from the Kent County Archaeologist that an archaeological evaluation take place as a pre-planning requirement, and to publish the results either on line, or through OASIS and/or in a local journal.

#### 4 METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the SWAT Archaeology Specification and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2014).

#### 4.2 Fieldwork

- 4.2.1 A total of nine evaluation trenches were proposed within the extents of the Site (Figure 2).
- 4.2.2 Each trench was initially scanned for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.
- 4.2.3 Where appropriate trenches were hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features were excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and CIfA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was

maintained on site that included working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.

#### 4.3 Recording

- 4.3.1 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) was undertaken. The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights.
- 4.3.2 Photographs were taken as appropriate providing a record of excavated features and deposits, along with images of the overall trench to illustrate their location and context. The record also includes images of the Site overall. The photographic record comprises digital photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive.
- 4.3.3 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in Appendix 1. Layers and fills are identified in this report thus (100), whilst the cut of the feature is shown [100]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes; these are used in the report. Each number has been attributed to a specific trench with the primary number(s) relating to specific trenches (*i.e.* Trench 1, 101+, Trench 2, 201+, Trench 3, 301+ etc.).

#### 5 RESULTS

#### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A total of nine evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision. Fourteen trenches contained features of archaeological interest and are described below.

#### 5.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence

- 5.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded across the majority of the Site comprising either tarmac/formation layers overlying natural deposits or topsoil sealing an intact colluvium which overlay the natural clay geology.
- 5.2.2 The topsoil generally consisted of friable mid brown silty clay, topped with grass, overlying the colluvium which consisted of firm grey yellow silt. Tarmac and formation layers within the hardstanding areas represent existing sports courts.
- 5.2.3 Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence for all trenches.

#### 5.3 Overview

5.3.1 No archaeological features were recorded within any of the nine trenches. Minimal truncation of the surviving soils sequence was present although within Trench 8 and Trench 9 modern ditches (805, 806, 905, 906) and services (807 and 908) truncated colluvium (803) and (903) respectively.

#### 6 FINDS

#### 6.1 Overview

6.1.1 No archaeological finds were retrieved during this evaluation.

#### 7 DISCUSSION

#### 7.1 Archaeological Narrative

- 7.1.1 Despite the potential for the presence and survival of archaeological remains no archaeological features were recorded within any of the nine trenches.
- 7.1.2 The presence of the colluvium would suggest that preservation levels are relatively high and that if archaeological remains were present then they would have suffered minimal disturbance.
- 7.1.3 The nature of the modern features is not entirely clear. No obvious features are present on the historic mapping (CAT 2016) so it must be assumed that truncation of the colluvium and natural geology must have occurred as a result of construction associated with the development of the existing school and services.
- 7.1.4 No archaeological finds were present in the topsoil and colluvial layers, which would have provided an indication of settlement within the surrounding area.

#### 7.2 Conclusions

- 7.2.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification and identified intact medieval deposits preserved in situ. Development proposals, which comprise the construction of new Academy premises are therefore unlikely to impact on archaeological remains. Further archaeological mitigation, should it be necessary, will need to be determined in consultation with the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer and local planning authority.
- 7.2.2 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Principal Archaeological

Officer (KCC) of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

#### 8 ARCHIVE

#### 8.1 General

- 8.1.1 The Site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; CIfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 8.1.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared.

  The physical archive comprises 1 file/document case of paper records & A4 graphics

#### 9 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 9.1.1 SWAT would like to thank The John Wallis Church of England Academy for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Simon Mason, Principal Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council, for his advice and assistance.
- 9.1.2 Tim Allen (MCIfA) supervised the archaeological fieldwork; illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. The report was prepared and collated by David Britchfield (MCIfA) and edited Dr. Paul Wilkinson (MCIfA).

#### 10 REFERENCES

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#### 11 APPENDIX 1 – TRENCH TABLES

Trench 1	Dimensions: 16.1m x 1.6m		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
101	Tarmac	Existing surface	0.00-0.05
102	Friable pink sandy gravel	Formation layer	0.05-0.16
103	Firm mix of hardcore and clay	Formation layer	0.16-0.39
104	Grey brown clay	Natural	0.39+

Trench 2	Dimensions: 16m x 1.6m		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
201	Tarmac	Existing surface	0.00-0.06
202	Friable pink sandy gravel	Formation layer	0.06-0.29
203	Firm mix of hardcore and clay	Formation layer	0.29-0.53
204	Bedded natural deposits of friable brown mud/clay stone	Natural	0.53+
205	Grey brown clay	Natural	-
206	Service trench	Modern	-
207	Land drain	Modern	-

Trench 3	Dimensions: 11.9m x 1.6m		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
301	Tarmac	Existing surface	0.00-0.06
302	Friable pink sandy gravel	Formation layer	0.06-0.30
303	Firm mix of hardcore and clay	Formation layer	0.30-0.41
304	Bedded natural deposits of friable brown mud/clay stone	Natural	0.41+
305	Bedded natural deposit of blue green silty clay	Natural	0.41+
306	Foundation for fence	Modern	-

Trench 4	Dimensions: 20m x 1.6m		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
401	Grass	Surface	0.00-0.01
402	Dark brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.01-0.16
403	Firm grey yellow silt with occasional manganese	Colluvium	0.16-0.43
404	Grey brown yellow clay	Natural	043+
405	Land drain	Modern	-

Trench 5	Dimensions: 20m x 1.6m		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
501	Grass	Surface	0.00-0.02
502	Dark brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.02-0.19
503	Firm grey yellow silt with occasional manganese	Colluvium	0.19-0.51

504	Grey brown yellow clay	Natural	0.51+
505	Land drain	Modern	-
506	Blue grey bedded clay	Natural	-

Trench 6	Dimensions: 20m x 1.6m		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
601	Grass	Surface	0.00-0.02
602	Dark brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.02-0.21
603	Firm grey yellow silt with occasional manganese	Colluvium	0.21-0.67
604	Grey brown yellow clay	Natural	0.67+
605	Brown bedded clay	Natural	0.67+
606	Moderately compact mottled yellow grey clay	Natural	0.67+
607	Moderately compact dark brown clay	Natural	0.67+
608	Moderately compact mid brown clay	Natural	0.67+
609	Cut of test pit into 605	Investigative	-
610	Ceramic sections	Modern land drain	-
611	Pebbles	Modern land drain	-

Trench 7	Dimensions: 20m x 1.6m		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
701	Grass	Surface	0.00-0.02
702	Dark brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.02-0.21
703	Firm grey brown silt	Colluvium	0.21-0.51
704	Grey brown yellow clay	Natural	0.51+
705	Stiff brown bedded clay	Natural	0.51+
706	Cut of test pit into 705	Investigative	-

Trench 8	Dimensions: 20m x 1.6m		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
801	Grass	Surface	0.00-0.02
802	Dark brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.02-0.20
803	Firm grey brown silt	Colluvium	0.20-0.55
804	Grey brown yellow clay	Natural	0.55+
805	Moderately compact mottled grey clay silt	Modern linear	-
806	Moderately compact dark brown clay silt same as (905)	Modern linear	-
807	Electricity cable (same as 908)	Modern service	-
808	Cut of test pit into 806	Investigative	-

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Trench 9	Dimensions: 20m x 1.6m		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
901	Grass	Surface	0.00-0.01
902	Dark brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.01-0.26
903	Firm yellow brown silt	Colluvium	0.26-0.65

904	Orange brown yellow clay	Natural	0.65+
905	Moderately compact dark brown clay silt (same as 806)	Modern linear	1
906	Moderately compact dark brown clay silt	Modern linear	-
907	Cut of test pit into 906	Investigative	-
908	Electricity cable (same as 807)	Modern service	-



## Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation of land at the John Wallis Academy, Millbank Road, Ashford, Kent

Summary: This specification covers an archaeological evaluation of land at the John Wallis Academy, Millbank Road, Ashford in Kent. The site is for a proposed redevelopment for a new primary school and there is potential for archaeology to survive on site. The archaeological work will be phased in order to facilitate the sequence of construction which is planned to take place during the school summer holidays.

#### Phase 1:

Three evaluation trenches  $25m \times 1.8m$  on the proposed footprint of the new building (green on Figure 1).

Two evaluation trenches 25m x 1.8m on the New Games Court (green on Figure 1).

Two evaluation trenches 25m x 1.8m on the New Games Court (green on Figure 2).

Two evaluation trenches  $25 \times 1.8 \text{m}$  on the new car park and access road (green on Figure 2).

Post excavation and publication timescale and programme will also need to be agreed prior to commencement of construction work on site.

- 2. Site Location & Description: The site lies to the south of Ashford in the Stanhope area c.2.5km to the south-west of the town centre. The ground is currently partly hard standing in the form of two sports courts and partly turfed playing fields. It is bounded to the north and east by a sports pitch and the Skills Block, to the south of the Runcie Building, and playing fields to the west. The OS location is 99794 40369.
- 3. Planning Background & Nature of Development: Development proposals for this site

comprise the demolition of the existing sports courts and the construction of a new primary school. The results of the archaeological evaluation can guide the appropriate planning permission mitigation measures for this development.

#### 4. Geological & Topographical Background:

On the basis of current information from BGS, the site lies on Bedrock Geology of Weald Clay Formation-Mudstone. Pleistocene deposits of sand and gravel, mapped as Terrace 3, occur as outcrops in the locality, but none are mapped within the PDA.

#### 5. Archaeological & Historical Background Potential

A search of the Historic Environment Records as well as a list of reports of archaeological investigations not yet included in the HER was commissioned for the Desk-Based Assessment from the Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group, along with recently published reports on major sites on the south side of Ashford. In addition the grey literature report lists and reports have been checked. The HER and reports search covers a radius of 500m around the PDA (centred on TQ 99794 40369). These records have been assessed in terms of their particular relevance to the PDA and only significant evidence is cited in this report. Further (online) historic environment records (National Monuments Records) were also consulted in comparison. The archaeological data from these searches can be found in the Canterbury Archaeological Trust DBA.

#### 6. Specific Aims of the Archaeological Work:

The aims of this investigation are to determine the potential for Prehistoric, Iron Age and Roman activity and in addition Early Medieval and medieval remains.

#### 7. Methodology:

The programme of archaeological work should be carried out in a phased approach and

will commence with evaluation through trial trenching. This initial phase (Phase 1) should determine whether any significant archaeological remains would be affected by the development and if so what mitigation measures are appropriate. Such measures may include further detailed archaeological investigation (strip, map and sample), or an archaeological watching brief during construction work. This specification sets out the requirements for trial trenching on the site and any further archaeological work, such as strip, map and sample or a watching brief, would need to be subject to additional specifications.

#### Phase 1:

Three evaluation trenches  $25m \times 1.8m$  on the proposed footprint of the new building (green on Figure 1).

Two evaluation trenches 25m x 1.8m on the New Games Court (green on Figure 1).

Two evaluation trenches 25m x 1.8m on the New Games Court (green on Figure 2).

Two evaluation trenches  $25 \times 1.8 \text{m}$  on the new car park and access road (green on Figure 2).

A suggested plan is attached (Figures 1 & 2). The trenches will be machine excavated down to natural or the archaeological horizon.

In addition a RAMS (Risk Assessment and Method Statement) will be produced before the work starts on site and issued to all interested parties.

There will also be an allowance of c.30m of contingency trenching which could be used if it would help address the aims set out above. Contingency trenching can be activated following agreement with the County Archaeologist. Further requirements are set out in KCC Spec Manual for Trial Trenching part B (attached).

- **8. Site Recording:** requirements are set out in KCC Spec Manual for Trial Trenching part B.
- 9. Site Reporting and Archiving: requirements are set out in KCC Spec Manual for Trial

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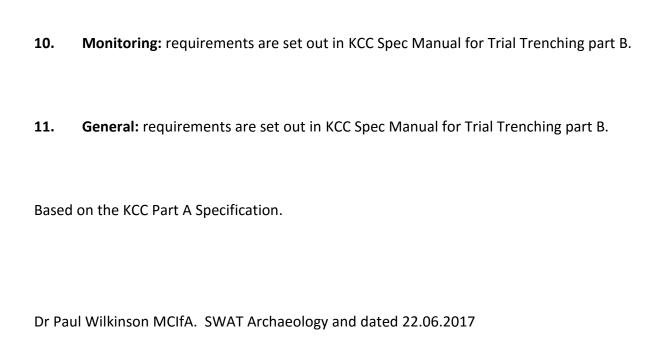
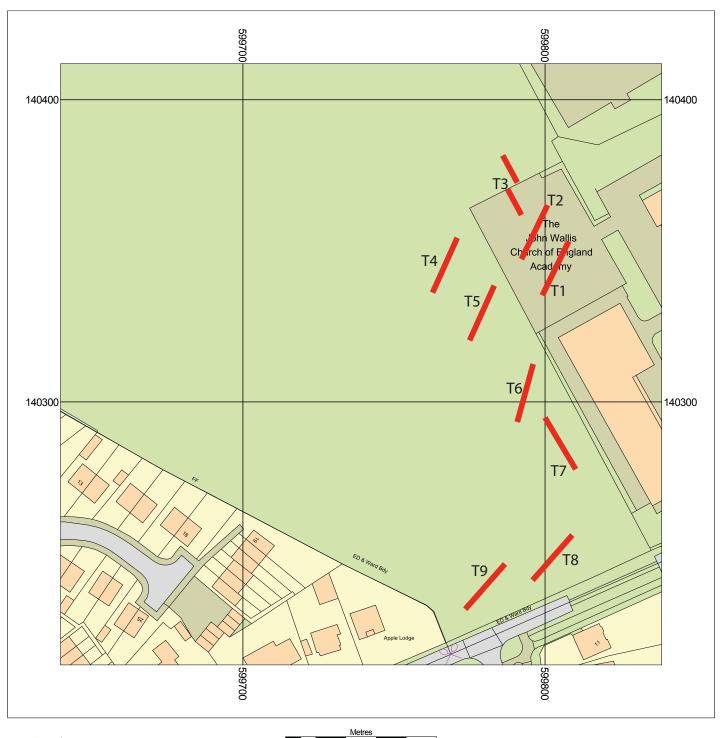




Figure 1: Site location map



#### **OS Plan Colour**





Supplied by: License number:

Produced: Serial number: 5 10 20 30 40 50 Scale: 1:1250 John Wallis Academy

Ashford



National Map Centre 100031961 28/07/2017

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Plot centre co-ordinates: Download file: Project name:

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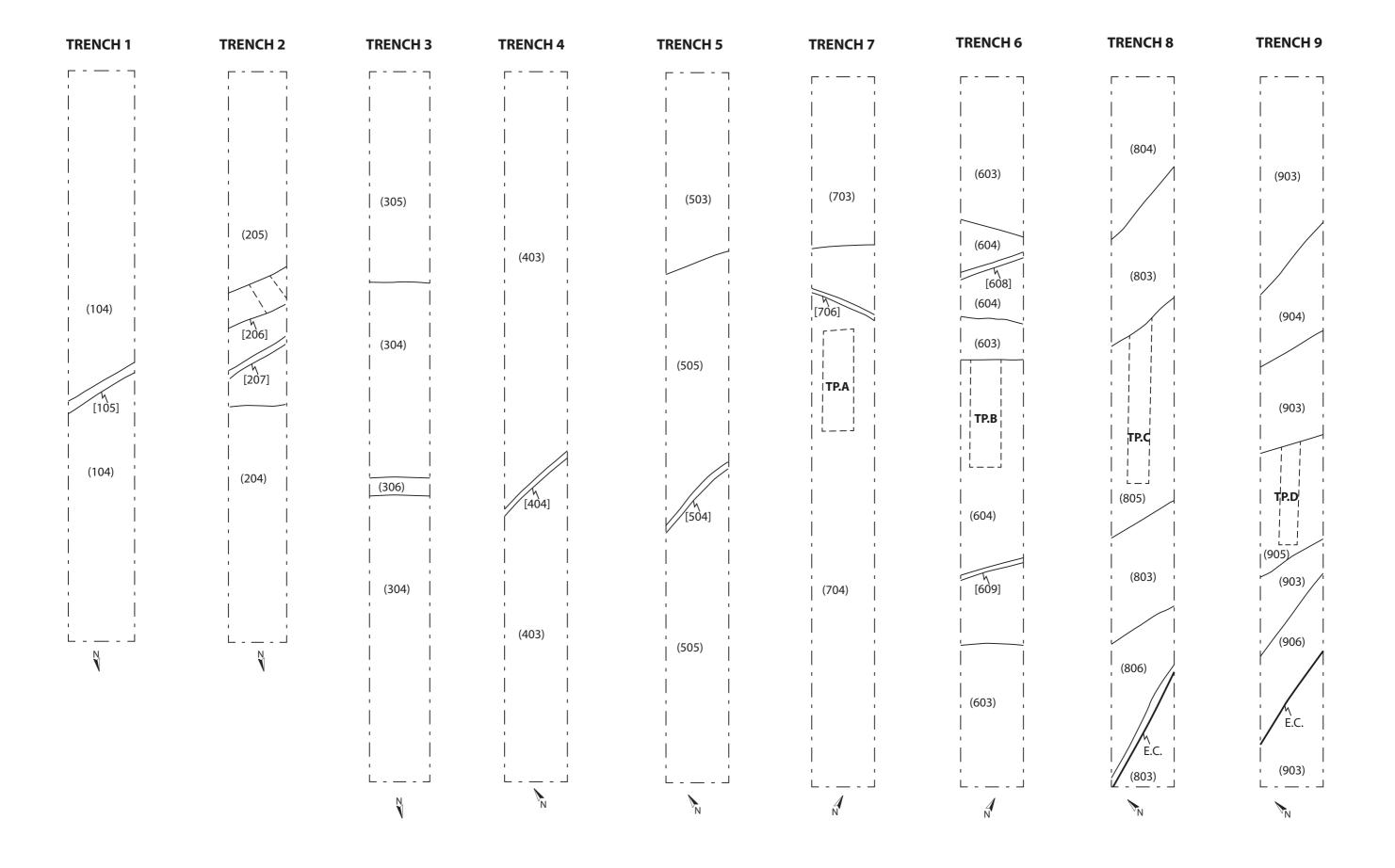


Figure 3: Trench plans

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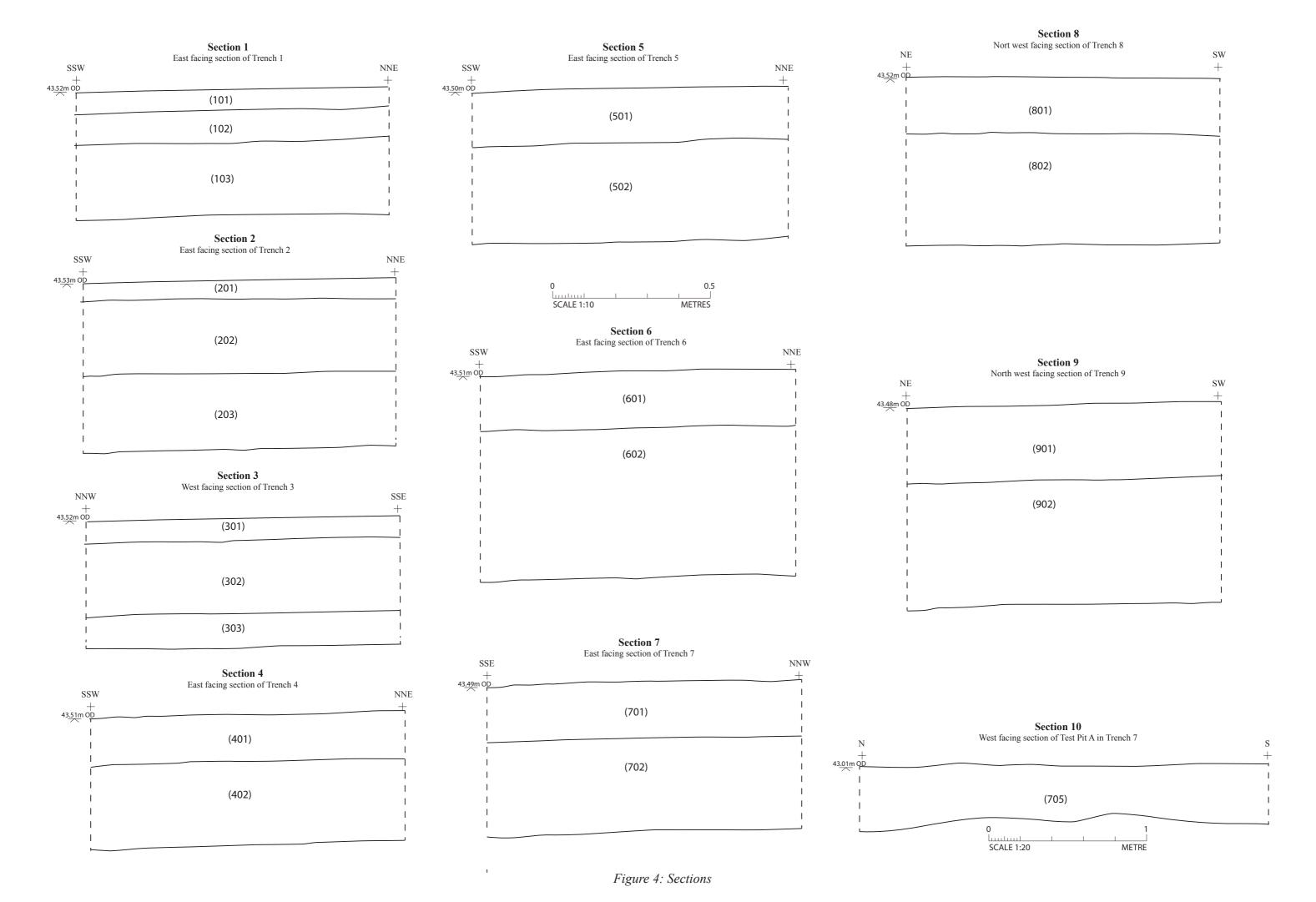




Plate 1. The Site (looking north)



Plate 2. Trench 8 (looking SSW)



Plate 3. Trench 5 (looking NNE)



Plate 4. Trenches 2, 3 (looking NNE)



Plate 5. Trench 6 (looking NNE)



Plate 6. Section Trench 5



Plate 7. Trench 9 (looking SSW)



Plate 8. Section Trench 3



Plate 9. Test pit 6 trench 7



Plate 10. Test pit 6 trench 6



Plate 11. Test pit 8 trench 8



Plate 12. Test pit 9 trench 9